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ABSTRACT

A Quality Assurance Program (QAP) has been established by North Carolina as a means of assuring competent professional programs for teacher education. The QAP is based on two major premises: (1) Crucial competencies for teacher effectiveness can be identified, verified, and validated; and (2) Teacher education begins at initial entry and progresses in an orderly and sequential manner to graduation. The QAP will deal with a comprehensive evaluation of all requirements for entrance to colleges of education. The State Board of Education will set acceptable performance levels for two screening tests which are part of these entrance requirements. The General Education Achievement Test will have items organized around the areas of English and English usage, literature, the fine arts, social studies, science and mathematics. A written test will measure the use of language in response to specifically assigned topics. The QAP is concerned with establishing a means of clarifying, with colleges and local school boards, the competencies required for entrance to the colleges' teacher education programs. A major part of the planning generated by the QAP has therefore dealt with identifying 49 teacher competencies and general core competencies related directly to what North Carolina teachers are expected to know and perform. A strong component of the QAP is student teaching. Specific and uniform standards supporting the student teaching process have been established. Colleges of education and local school systems have developed procedures to assure full cooperation between institutions during the student teaching period. It is assumed that successful completion of the student teaching experience will allow the students to take the final criterion-referenced tests designed to determine whether they have mastered the minimum academic and professional competencies considered essential for successful teaching. (JD)

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# WHO SHALL CONTROL ENTRY TO TEACHER EDUCATION?

## North Carolina Quality Assurance Program

J. Pat Knight

Through the seventies the general public and the school factions of our society became increasingly alarmed concerning the inability of our public schools to produce a quality product -- an educated graduate. The achievement test scores of public school students continually declined and the SAT scores of college-bound students were consistently lower than was acceptable. The media have daily reminded the nation that our teachers and our students can neither write nor speak in an acceptable manner and that the overall decline in the knowledge of basic skills is rampant. In essence, the cost of education has continually risen while human and financial resources have sharply declined. Additionally, the quality of the educational program and the product of that program have drastically declined.

Recognizing the problem early in the seventies, the state education agency in North Carolina developed the Approved Program Approach wherein the institutions of higher education were required to submit for approval to the State Department of Public Instruction in complete form, each of its teacher education programs. The state in return critiqued, evaluated, and passed judgment upon the accredibility of each program. Recommendations for additions, deletions, and improvements based on action for continuation of approved programs are to be sent to each institution at least once every five years. Following the Approved Program Approach, the state designed the competency based approach as a continuing support to shore up the North Carolina teacher education programs.

Continued study by both the State Department of Public Instruction and various institutions of higher education has demonstrated that neither the Approved Program Approach nor the competency based plan was achieving, to any significant degree, the goal of quality education." Therefore, in 1979, the state of North Carolina, under the guidance of the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors

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of the University system embarked on a most extensive and comprehensive Quality Assurance Program as a means of assuring competent professional programs for teacher education. The Quality Assurance Program is based primarily on two major premises:

1. That there are crucial comptencies for teacher effectiveness that can be identified, verified, and validated.
2. That teacher education begins at the initial entry step into the University and that it progresses in a somewhat orderly and sequential manner throughout the student's years at the University.

Additionally, it is presumed that specific assessment procedures can be designed, developed, and applied at various points throughout the developmental process of teacher education that will provide accurate feedback relative to the student's educational competencies and predicted future success.

Specifically, the QAP will provide a detailed description of the basic knowledge and skills developed by each prospective teacher. Procedures are being developed that will evaluate each student entering the University, the teacher education program, the profession, and ultimately each beginning teacher seeking continued teacher certification.

Previously, the emphasis had been on evaluation of programs with less emphasis on evaluation of the individual. Quality Assurance represents a switch from a program critique to a placement of considerable emphasis at both the state and institutional levels on the evaluation of individuals.

The first step in the QAP deals with a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of all requirements for entrance into institutions of higher education as they apply to future candidates for admission to teacher education programs. It is assumed that the strength of any teacher education program and the competencies of its graduates depend, to a large extent, on the quality of the student at the point of entry into that institution. Any institution seeking to improve the quality and effectiveness of its teacher education program must consider carefully

the requirements of admission to that institution. A standardized entrance requirement for the N. C. system is not the goal. Admission requirements however must be based on data depicting and predicting the success of persons going through the program. The institutions must develop criteria for admission that will assure the quality of persons entering the programs. It is also stressed that students admitted to institutions, enrolling for the expressed purpose of entering a teacher education program, be advised at the earliest possible time concerning the probability of their success in completing the professional education sequence.

The second component within the QAP deals with the development and implementation of a pre-teacher education critiquing procedure designed to evaluate the basic skills required of all teachers. These skills include the academic areas of English and English usage, literature, the fine arts, social studies, science and mathematics. The screening procedure will be a prerequisite for admission to professional teacher education programs.

It is assumed that these areas of learning represent the common information elements, the basic skills concepts, and the philosophical attitudes which all citizens should possess if they are to function effectively in society. It is further believed that teachers must be competent in these basic skills and elements and that prospective teachers must be able to demonstrate that they both understand and appreciate the interrelatedness of each of the fields of study.

Two screening examinations -- a General Education Achievement Test and a Writing Test -- are to be made a part of the entrance requirements into teacher education. These tests, a prerequisite to admission to the teacher education program, will be administered and passed prior to formal admission into the program.

A North Carolina assessment of student performance on the NTE has indicated that more people have failed the common area of the test than have failed the teaching area. Therefore, assuming that knowledge in the common area of the NTE is basic to teaching success, the University will use the tests to measure a knowledge base expected of individuals who have completed an acceptable general education program.

The tests will serve four additional functions: (1) to enable the respective IHE's to evaluate objectively their general education curriculum and thus allow them to enact appropriate program modifications; (2) to provide an evaluation instrument useful in determining the effectiveness of the general education program in meeting the requirements of the state approved teacher education program; (3) to provide admission information concerning each prospective certification track student and thus to assist in determining the type and degree of counseling or remediation necessary to pass the test successfully. In effect, this concept of the test will make the students aware of where they are and what they must do in order to be admitted into the teacher education program. Additionally, students who decide that they do not wish to follow the teacher education route will still have time to redirect their educational program.

The North Carolina State Board of Education will set the acceptable levels of performance for each test. The General Education Achievement Test having items organized around themes with direct application to each general education area, will be developed in a response-selection format. The test will be designed to assess mastery of factual information and conceptual learning for each of the five identified basic areas of knowledge. Students may retest in any of the five areas wherein they fail to demonstrate minimum competency.

The Writing Test will measure the use of language in response to specifically assigned topics. At the time of testing, each student will select one of two identified topics on which to write the essay. The writing samples will be scored

by representatives of the faculty of English, English Education, and Writing departments in both the LEA's and IHE's. Students must achieve a minimum score as indicated by the State Board of Education. Provisions for retesting are based on an overall or wholistic score.

The third component of the QAP is concerned with establishing a means of clarifying with the IHE's and the LEA's the competencies required for inclusion within both the academic and the professional programs in order to produce effective and competent teachers.

A vast number of competencies have been identified that relate directly to teacher and teaching effectiveness. Many of these competencies are specific to a content area while others relate more directly to teaching strategy.

A major part of the planning generated by the QAP dealt directly with identifying teaching area competencies and general core competencies essential in all teachers. A basic set of criteria was established to delimit/delineate the many beliefs and assumptions regarding teacher effectiveness to a workable set of basic competencies.

The first basic criterion dealt with identifying which competencies related directly to what North Carolina teachers were actually expected to know and perform in the teaching situation.

The second basic criterion dealt with the full range of professional skills from knowledge of basic laws to high level interpretational skills.

The third criterion dealt with those competencies that reflect the critical knowledge and skills that are relevant, workable, and within the achievement capacity of the individual IHE teacher education programs.

The fourth and final criterion dealt with developing clarifying statements of sufficient nature and scope to inform both the learner and the evaluator the manner in which the competencies are to be demonstrated.

The QAP provides identified competencies in forty-nine areas of teacher certification. The competencies in each certification area link the state/IHE certification requirements with the knowledge and skills necessary to enact the actual instructional program in the schools.

The fourth component is designed to assure a strong program of student teaching experiences through a close coordination of campus-based and field-based activities involving the state education agency, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, and classroom teachers. This will include the identification, training, and uniform compensation of successful classroom teachers who supervise and direct the student teaching experiences. The program will insure that each individual in professional teacher education has successfully demonstrated the ability to perform in an actual classroom situation and that the supervision of the experience is conducted by effective professional educators. This supervision will be conducted in close cooperation with appropriate representatives of the institutions of higher education.

Student teaching has been described as the period of time wherein students are directly involved in a sustained and concentrated period of training within a local education agency and under the auspices of the University. This is the primary aspect of pre-service training where students assume direct responsibility for a group of pupils and perform the same duties as the classroom teacher, with the same rights and responsibilities. Such laboratory experiences include all those activities in the school and within the community which contribute to effectiveness in teaching.

The student teacher must enact the student teaching experience in a natural, realistic teaching/learning situation. The student teacher must have the continual guidance of a qualified and college-approved cooperating teacher and the supervision of a University faculty member normally involved in the supervisory process.

Further, it is believed that student teaching should furnish a threefold experience: (1) an opportunity to implement theory; (2) a field of activity which will help the students to see the need for further study; and (3) an opportunity for the students to study their ability and desire to function effectively as teachers.

In order to assure that the student teaching stage of the in-service program provides adequate training, a common set of expectations of procedures has been developed. It is through the cooperative effort of both the IHE and LEA in determination of goals and actual supervision of the student teaching experience that these competency expectations will be met.

The completion of student teaching represents that point in professional training where the mastery of specifically identified core competencies must be evident. To this end, three specific and uniform standards supporting the student teaching process have been identified.

(1) the student teaching experience must be a full-time undertaking for a minimum duration of ten weeks.

(2) For effective supervision of the student teacher by both the LEA cooperating teacher and the IHE supervisor, minimum competencies have been identified, developed, and verified as they relate to outstanding teaching skills and appropriate supervisory skills.

(3) Minimum criteria have been developed that define an acceptable student teaching placement. Such a placement must be enacted cooperatively by both the institutions of higher education and the local education agency.

To insure the effectiveness of the student teaching experience, the institutions of higher education and the local education agencies have developed procedures to complement the actions of each institution. Basically, those procedures can be identified in several relevant areas.

(1) The public schools will, through an established committee composed of teachers and administrators, identify a pool of potential cooperating teachers who have met minimum competencies. Unfortunately, the IHE's are not destined to be involved in the process.

(2) The placement of student teachers will be determined jointly by the IHE supervisor and the designated LEA person.

(3) The supervision of the student teacher will be shared jointly by both the IHE supervisor and the LEA cooperating teacher. A minimum number of supervisory visits by the IHE supervisor will be determined.

(4) The affected IHE will offer training sessions designed to prepare the designated LEA cooperating teachers for the supervisory role.

(5) Cooperating teachers will be compensated monetarily beyond their regular salaries.

Component number five of the Quality Assurance Program describes the final inservice competencies required of the prospective teacher. Successful completion of the student teaching experience will allow the individuals to take the final criterion-reference tests designed to determine whether they have mastered the minimum academic and professional competencies considered essential for successful teaching. Data produced by these tests will enable the various IHE's to identify deficiencies in their teacher education program and will provide a basis for program modification and remedial education activities.